

CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL
AND DISTRICT

Camberwell Historical Society



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Principal Patron: Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Blainey, AC
Patron: Her Worship the Mayor of Boroondara, Cr Lisa Hollingsworth

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

George Fernando



There was a memorial service for the anniversary of the death of Brig-Gen Harold 'Pompey' Elliott on 23 March at 11 am at Burwood Cemetery. Her Worship Mayor of Boroondara Cr Lisa Hollingsworth laid a wreath on behalf of the City of Boroondara and I laid a wreath on behalf of Camberwell Historical Society. This was followed by a presentation and forum on Pompey Elliott with Ross McMullin at the Camberwell Pompey RSL. Please see the report below.

We have an urgent need for more committee members as two of the current committee are resigning at the AGM: our treasurer Roy Alderton, and Bryony Cosgrove.

BRIG-GEN HAROLD 'POMPEY' ELLIOTT COMMEMORATION ON 23 MARCH AT BURWOOD CEMETRY

Graham Williams, Friends of 15th Brigade

Lambis Englezos opened the ceremony and welcomed everyone with a special thanks to students from the Ballarat and Clarendon College and Piper Les Kenfield from Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums for their attendance. He also welcomed Her Worship Mayor of Boroondara, Cr Lisa Hollingsworth and members of the Camberwell Historical Society. He then introduced the guest speaker Dr Ross McMullin, historian, author, and 'Pompey' Elliott's biographer.



George Fernando, The Hon. Wendy Baden-Powell and Her Worship the Mayor of Boroondara Cr Lisa Hollingsworth

Dr Ross McMullin



Today I'd like to talk about Pompey's role in something extraordinary that I haven't covered before in our commemorations of this anniversary.

POMPEY AND BUTTERFLIES

The context is crucial. It's the climax of the conflict in 1918. The Germans have launched their immense and long-expected offensive that they hope will win the war. The British are driven well back. There are grave fears that the war will be lost. The Australians are rushed to the rescue. Their contribution is vital. In fact, as some of you will have heard me say before in the context of 1918, these Australians were influencing the destiny of the world in that critical year more than Australians had ever done before or have ever done since. And Pompey and his brigade were front and centre in this crucial phase. They were directed to march urgently to Corbie to safeguard the vital Somme bridges, which involved such a gruelling night march of around 20 miles when they were already weary that Pompey declared he had "never been prouder" of his men. His vigorous leadership ensured that they carried out their important defensive responsibilities satisfactorily, but he became very concerned about the conduct of the retreating British units he encountered, especially their propensity for widespread looting. There seemed to Pompey to be more British officers and men in Corbie "looking for what they could loot than were fighting the enemy". With the officers out of control, it was impossible to discipline their men. When a British captain was apprehended in Corbie with a mess cart full of looted champagne, Pompey decided that enough was enough. After handing the culprit over to the military police, Pompey issued a notice declaring that the next officer caught looting would be summarily and publicly hanged in the Corbie market square, and his body would be left swinging as a deterrent. Pompey ensured that this blunt decree was displayed prominently in Corbie. Looting ceased immediately. As Pompey explained afterwards, "None seemed inclined to make of themselves a test case".

Meanwhile the Germans were still attacking. They broke through in the sector held by the British division that the looters belonged to, but there was a very different situation in the area held by Pompey's men. In that sector the German attackers, as Pompey put it, came to the conclusion "that they had urgent business elsewhere".

Now I presumably have covered in previous talks here the important role Pompey played in this climax of the war, notably his brigade's outstanding resistance, his famous anti-looting notice, and other controversial episodes as well. But I don't think you've heard me talk about something else that occurred while Pompey was at Corbie during this crucial phase. This happened as a result of the premises he was allocated for his headquarters. Pompey was directed to occupy a building near the Somme that astonished him. The residence was, he wrote, "a most glorious house, the finest I have ever been in", with "exquisite" furniture, carpets that would "make your mouth water", and stunning collections of photographs, weapons, birds, flora and fauna. In his letters to his family back in Melbourne, and also in other correspondence, he waxed lyrical in page after page of enraptured description.

“The dining room had a wonderful suite — ebony — evidently of Indian workmanship, beautifully inlaid with silver in a design of wreaths of flowers with fruit — the leaves and branches of silver, the fruit in bronze and gold. The chairs upholstered in scarlet morocco with large square headed silver nails. Ceiling a design in black and red.” “The drawing room ... too was gorgeous — the furniture being upholstered in tapestry so designed that each couch and chair appeared to have a landscape painting in colours upon it — the colour shade of the whole room was creamy white and rose”, and it had “some beautiful marble statuettes and dainty china ornaments and vases”. “The smoking room [had] the most wonderful collection of arms and armour — Japanese swords, Saracen helmet and shield and sword beautifully damascened in gold.”

And the billiard room was phenomenal: “ranged round the walls from floor to ceiling in cabinets of beautifully polished walnut was the most wonderful collection of gorgeous butterflies I have ever seen”. Also “in about 20 little separate stands, each fitted with a pair of glasses”, were what Pompey described as “sort of peep shows” — “the most wonderful series of stereoscopic views I have ever seen”, some in colour, depicting sights from around the world. In addition, outside there was “a wonderful conservatory with all sorts of foliage plants and [even] two big Australian tree ferns and a lovely little Cootamundra wattle all in bloom. I sent a bunch to Birdwood and Rawlinson and [told them] it was a sign of victory.” “There were [also] two large hothouses in the grounds with most gorgeous orchids just coming to bloom. About two acres of Rose Garden with every plant most carefully tended and labelled. A large aviary with all sorts of rare birds — flamingos, argus pheasants, ... etc.” So I reckon you’re getting the gist. Pompey was flabbergasted by this fantastic place. If the word had been around in his time, we could have said he was gobsmacked.

I might mention in passing that I managed to find where this building was located when I visited Corbie many years ago while I was retracing Pompey’s movements. There was a grand-looking residence in the vicinity, though not the one Pompey lived in, I gather. (I only had a brief wander outside, I didn’t get to look inside.) But while Pompey was there, in early April 1918, this remarkable residence looked decidedly vulnerable. Big German shells were landing in the vicinity. It was an acutely perilous time, and Pompey was very busy with onerous responsibilities in Britain’s gravest crisis of the war, but he nevertheless decided he had to do something about the magnificent treasures in this incredible building. So he told the French interpreter based at his headquarters to write a letter to the French government recommending that the precious art and furniture should be removed to prevent its possible destruction, and he received a grateful reply from the authorities. Shortly afterwards lorries arrived, sent by the French government, to take these treasures away to safety.

Pompey also inquired specifically about the butterflies that had entranced him. He found they were even more special than he’d realised. This was in fact the second-most complete collection of butterflies in the whole world, and included unique specimens that were literally irreplaceable. They belonged to the Museum of Paris, which had loaned them to the owner of the Corbie residence because he was classifying them with a view to writing a learned publication. A museum official wrote to Pompey about this very special collection, urging that “it will be splendid if I can get it away safely as it is absolutely priceless, and asking us to please be careful as the insects are extremely fragile”. The upshot was remarkable. While Pompey and his men were making their vital contribution to preventing the war from being lost — strengthening the defences, securing the Somme bridges, counter-attacking successfully — they also managed to carefully package up this amazing collection of butterflies and transport it well away from the danger zone.

Pompey later reported proudly that “so careful were the men with the fragile specimen cases that the whole immense collection was loaded, conveyed along rough roads some 40 miles or so to Flixecourt, and unloaded there almost absolutely intact”. The museum officials were ecstatic. A professor wrote to Pompey proposing an expression of gratitude. As Pompey put it, he “talked about rewarding me in some way, I suppose making me a director or honorary governor of the museum or something, but I wrote and told him that I had no need to be rewarded for what anyone should do in the interests of science”. The owner of the remarkable Corbie residence, who had been forced to vacate it in the emergency, was also extremely grateful, and Pompey wrote to him too: “Je suis très heureux d’avoir eu ainsi l’occasion de rendre service à un Français et le Science”. Which, as you’ve all no doubt grasped, means “I’m very happy to have had the opportunity in this way to render service to a Frenchman and to Science”. This remarkable story appeals to me as an interesting and little-known window into this phase of the war that has interested me for a long time — that is, Australia’s role in the climax of the conflict. But what this story also does is to illuminate and demonstrate that the extraordinary character we have gathered here today to commemorate was much more than a brilliant, forceful and decisive military commander. He was also a man of culture with an artistic sensibility and an acute sense of beauty.

TWO VANISHED CAMBERWELL MANSIONS

John Maidment OAM

If one climbs to the top of the tower of Camberwell Town Hall, an amazing view presents itself as I found way back in 1991. To the east, the Dandenong Ranges, to the south a distant view of Mount Eliza and Arthurs Seat, to the west the city of Melbourne and Port Phillip Bay and to the north trees and housing with Kinglake in the distance. If one climbed the tower in 1894, one would have seen two large mansions about half a kilometre away, at the intersection of Athelstan Road, Bowen Street and Camberwell Road, on the site of Athelstan Apartments, Regis Shenley



and the Salvation Army. One mansion had a very tall tower, gleaming white in the sunshine, and both mansions were sited to the east of what would become the Camberwell Sports Ground.



The most imposing of the two mansions, called 'Hillsbrae', appears to have been built by William Edward Bryson who was the Shire Engineer of Camberwell, and later a licensed surveyor. He had also been a surveyor and engineer for the shires of Goulburn, Nunawading and Oakleigh. Bryson died on 24 June 1903, aged 80 years, at 27 Melville Street, Hawthorn (in a small brick terrace house – he may have been affected by the 1890s depression and property speculation).

The mansion was dubbed 'Bryson's Folly'. Its existence was unknown to me until the late Trevor Hart presented a lecture to the Camberwell Historical Society around a decade ago. I was amazed as I had seen nothing similar before.

The tower appears to have had six levels, crowned by a slate roof and a cast-iron balustrade. It was flanked by what look like scrolled or Dutch gables. The right side of the house was wider than the left and there appear to be stables and outbuildings to the right. It was sited in a well-established garden with tall trees – a tall Norfolk Island pine stands in the distance. Who might have been the architect? James Gall would probably be the prime contender having designed the Camberwell Town Hall, 'Frognaal' and 'Verulam' in Mont Albert Road, 'Mintaro' at Monegeetta and 'Noorilim' at Murchison, all with tall towers. Some of the architectural detail looks very similar to that of the Camberwell Town Hall.

Neither Professor Miles Lewis nor Terry Sawyer, who compiled the *Melbourne Mansions Database*, were aware of the house and had never seen anything comparable. What happened to 'Hillsbrae'? Scottish-born John Bryce Thompson occupied the property until his death on 1 June 1921. It is presumed the mansion was demolished at this time and subdivided into smaller properties – the land may have extended down to Edward Street.

Strangely, about 20 years ago, a timber house named 'Barskimming' in Rowell Avenue was sold. The verandah incorporated stained glass panels depicting marine creatures, some in elaborate wooden architectural surrounds unrelated to the house. These were later removed and stored but I am unsure where they are now. They could have been salvaged from 'Hillsbrae' when it was demolished and brought to Rowell Avenue in a hand cart.

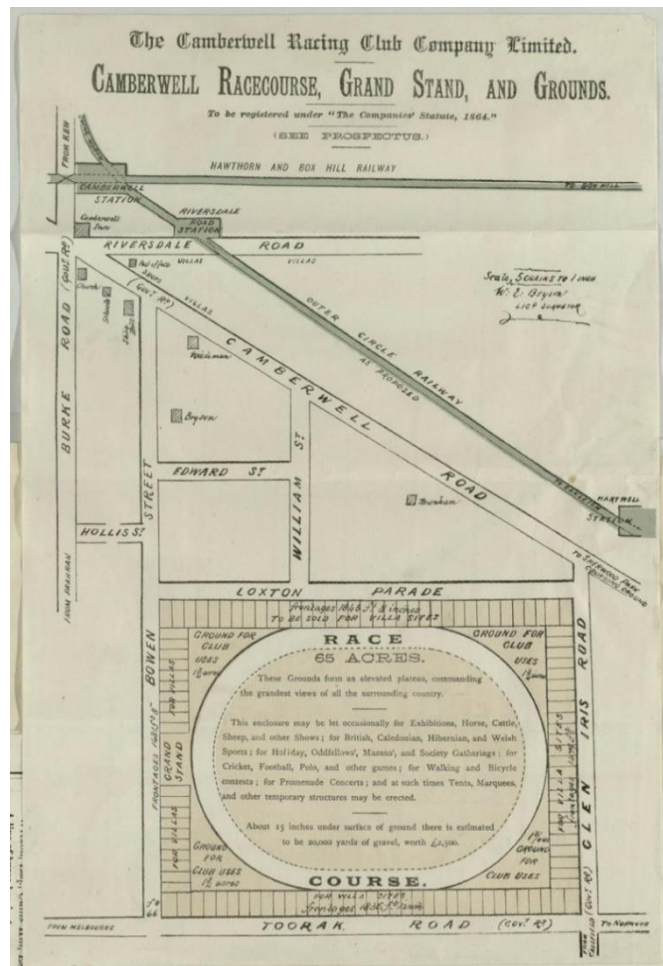


The second and smaller mansion was located closer to Camberwell Road and was initially known as 'Finbolt' but much later known as 'Bethany' when it was taken over by the Salvation Army.

It was built by Ivan Douch Weidemann but quickly passed to other owners. Dating from circa 1891, it had a two-storey return verandah with iron lacework and a diminutive tower in the centre. It is listed in the *Melbourne Mansions Database* and the architect that is suggested is Norman Hitchcock, a name unfamiliar name to me. It was demolished within living memory and replaced by aged care apartments.

Both houses were prominently sited at the top of what was known as Champion Hill, named after a site in London's southern suburb of Camberwell.

Towards the end of the 19th century, a plan, drawn by W. E. Bryson, was issued for a new 65-acre racecourse in Camberwell. The properties of Messrs Weidemann and Bryson are shown at the top centre. The racecourse never proceeded, maybe owing to the financial depression of the 1890s – but what a strange place to site a racecourse, with such hilly topography.



HERITAGE PLAQUE

It would be excellent if an illustrated heritage plaque like many others in Camberwell could be erected on the diagonal path between Camberwell Road and Bowen Street showing the location of the two vanished mansions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Tom Sargeant, City of Boroondara Libraries, for help with two of the above images, the *Melbourne Mansions Database*, and information on the *Trove* newspaper database. The image of 'Finbolt' comes from the State Library of Victoria and the images of the stained glass were taken by the author.

THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE BOROONDARA'S BLUESTONE HERITAGE

George Demetrios



Bluestone Kerb and Channels in Burke Road Camberwell 1910

Bluestone kerb and channels are an iconic part of the character and history of many neighbourhoods in Boroondara, with residents placing high value on maintaining their historic bluestone spoon drains from the 1850s, their heritage three pitcher bluestone kerb and channels from the 1890s, and their historically significant concrete kerb and bluestone channels from the 1930s:



Bluestone spoon drain channel
Victorian era 1850s-1870s
Neave Street Hawthorn



Three pitcher kerb and channel
Victorian era 1880s-1900s
Sackville Street Kew



Concrete kerb and bluestone
Interwar era 1919-1939
Hyton Crescent Kew

The bluestone kerb and channels of the municipality are considered heritage elements of significance by the Boroondara community, due to their:

Historical Significance: Bluestone kerbs and channels were widely used in the 19th and early 20th centuries for road construction in Boroondara. They represent an important part of the City's early infrastructure and development.

Aesthetic Value: The bluestone material and traditional construction methods give our local kerbs and channels a distinctive appearance that contributes to the historic character of Boroondara's streetscapes.

Evidence of Early Craftsmanship: The manual laying of bluestone pitchers in kerbs and channels showcases the skills and techniques of early stonemasons and road builders in Boroondara.

Longevity: Many bluestone kerbs and channels in Boroondara have survived for over a century or more, demonstrating their durability and the quality of the original construction.

Cultural Significance: Bluestone kerbs and channels are tangible links to the past, helping to tell the story of Boroondara's development and the lives of early residents.

Council has now introduced a Draft Road Materials Policy, under which all our intact original historic bluestone kerb and channels will be reduced to one pitcher, leading to the loss of Boroondara's remaining historically significant original Victorian, Edwardian and Interwar era bluestone gutters.

The photographs below show what happened earlier this year in Bowen Street, Camberwell, when Boroondara Council reconstructed the road, replacing the existing original 19th century era wide bluestone gutters with a single pitcher channel, compromising the historic values and distinctive charm of the road's historic Victorian streetscape:



Bowen Street Camberwell 2024 bluestone kerb and channel reconstruction

Single bluestone pitcher channels, with a bluestone kerb, have no historical significance, other than indicating where there had previously been earlier bluestone kerb and channelling. This type of construction, with only one pitcher, was not used in earlier road construction methods in Boroondara. Using a single pitcher with a kerb is not an authentic representation of the original construction techniques and can be misleadingly interpreted as an early form of road construction. Throughout Boroondara, actual earlier multi-pitcher Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war road construction methods have been lost due to Council road reconstructions using just one pitcher. In contrast, other Melbourne Councils have adopted policies specifically aimed at preserving their significant heritage bluestone kerbs and channels, by ensuring that all existing bluestone gutters are reset to the original historic pattern, preserving their local bluestone heritage character. This demonstrates that it is possible for Boroondara Council to also prioritise heritage bluestone conservation:

- The Whitehorse City Council has a Heritage Kerbs Channels and Laneways Policy that aims to preserve significant heritage bluestone kerb and channelling, bluestone laneways and brick laneways in the municipality.
- The City of Stonnington has a policy guideline for conserving and maintaining bluestone road and laneway features as part of their Heritage Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2029.

- Yarra City Council has a detailed policy that outlines the preservation of bluestone heritage in the municipality.
- Merri-bek City Council has a strong policy to preserve and celebrate its extensive bluestone heritage.
- Glen Eira City Council has a Bluestone Laneway and Kerb and Channel Reconstruction Policy that aims to recognise the historical significance and contribution to neighborhood character of the council's bluestone laneways and kerb and channel assets.
- The key principles of the City of Port Phillip's Heritage Kerbs, Channels and Laneways Policy is to preserve heritage bluestone kerbs and channels through maintenance, repair and sensitive reconstruction methods that aim to retain the original appearance and construction techniques as much as possible.
- The City of Hobsons Bay has a policy to conserve and enhance the distinctive bluestone features that contribute to the area's unique historic character.

To truly conserve Boroondara's original bluestone assets, which contribute significantly to the City's unique character, Boroondara residents have called on Council to look at the alternative solution of:

1. Ensuring reconstructions retain the original multi-pitcher design and detail.
2. Undertaking a proper heritage study to identify all Boroondara's historically significant bluestone laneways, crossovers and kerb and channels for protection.
3. Delaying the passing of the Draft Road Materials Policy until the bluestone heritage study has been completed.

Undertaking a proper heritage study to identify all of Boroondara's historically significant bluestone laneways, crossovers and kerb and channels will have the following benefits for Boroondara's bluestone heritage:

- **Identifying Significant Bluestone Infrastructure**
A comprehensive study will identify and document bluestone laneways, kerbs, channels, and crossovers that hold cultural heritage significance within Boroondara. This will allow for proper recognition and protection of our important bluestone heritage.
- **Establishing Heritage Criteria and Significance**
The study will assess Boroondara's bluestone heritage against the HERCON criteria used by Heritage Victoria to determine their level of cultural significance. This provides a robust framework for evaluating and ranking the heritage value of our bluestone laneways, kerbs and channels, and crossovers.
- **Informing Conservation Policies and Practices**
With a clear understanding of the bluestone heritage significance, the study will inform appropriate conservation policies, guidelines, and practices for maintaining, repairing, or reconstructing Boroondara's significant bluestone infrastructure. This will ensure our historical bluestone assets are preserved in an authentic and sensitive manner.
- **Mapping and Documentation**
The study will produce detailed mapping and documentation of the location, condition, and characteristics of significant bluestone laneways, kerbs and channels, and crossovers

within Boroondara. This will create a valuable record and resource for future planning, management, and interpretation of our bluestone heritage.

- **Prioritising Conservation Efforts**

By identifying Boroondara's most significant bluestone laneways, kerbs and channels, and crossovers, the study will help prioritise conservation efforts and allocation of resources towards protecting the most valuable of our area's bluestone assets first.

- **Community Engagement and Education**

The process of conducting a bluestone heritage study will engage Boroondara residents, raise awareness about the area's bluestone heritage, and educate the community on the importance of preserving our bluestone heritage assets.

In summary, a comprehensive bluestone heritage study in Boroondara will provide a robust framework for identifying, evaluating, documenting, and ultimately conserving the significant bluestone infrastructure that contributes to the cultural heritage and character of our municipality. Thus, by adopting this solution, Boroondara Council will ensure that any decision regarding the reconstruction or repair of the area's bluestone kerbs and channels will be informed by expert heritage advice and will align with best practice for conserving the municipality's bluestone heritage assets for future generations to come.

If other Council's view their bluestone assets as heritage, and conserve them accordingly, then there is no reason why Boroondara Council cannot do the same.

For more information, please contact the Boroondara residents group *Save Boroondara's Bluestone Heritage* at saveboroondarasbluestoneheritage@yahoo.com

Boroondara's Engage website at <https://engage.boroondara.vic.gov.au/> is an online survey where we can provide our feedback to Council, that Boroondara's iconic bluestone laneways, kerbs, channels, and crossovers, must be granted better heritage protection to ensure their long-term preservation for the future.

NEWS FROM BOROONDARA HERITAGE GROUP FOR ADVOCACY AND PROTECTION

Christina Branagan and Nerida Muirden



Community Heritage Nominations:

Many heritage-passionate people in our community have researched and successfully nominated 8 properties for heritage protection as part of Council's new Community Nomination Program which we, certain local councillors, and others in the community advocated for in 2023. These interesting places now have had full independent heritage studies completed by Council, which are full of really interesting local history and architectural information.

Council is seeking feedback from the community. If you would like to see these places kept for future generations to enjoy, then please go on the link below and read some of the wonderful heritage reports and show your support by filling out the very short questionnaires for each property. Hopefully many of these places will go forward to get protection over the next year.

Here is the link:

<https://yoursay.boroondara.vic.gov.au/preliminary-consultation-heritage-protection-1>



Xavier College Memorial Chapel, Kew. Designed by Ole Jorgensen who lived in Camberwell. Boroondara Council is considering giving heritage protection to his fine 1920s bungalow home at 21 Alma Road, Camberwell. He was the brother of Justav Jorgensen the artist of Montsalvat fame.

Boroondara 12-year Heritage Strategy... A first for our city:

Boroondara Council is developing a 12-year Heritage Strategy and is seeking input from the community this month.

Another consultation we wholeheartedly support is this one which should be the precursor to our Council developing a proper long-term vision and a set of heritage actions that they implement. If there is a strategy document then many other activities will follow, perhaps for example effective heritage promotion and education activities for all visitors and residents and heritage owners, to help share the understanding and love of our local heritage places and local history. Some councils have developed heritage departments as a result of this kind of work for example.

Many other councils in Melbourne and Regional Victoria already have these strategic documents. Please participate and have your say at the link below this month.

Here is the link: <https://yoursay.boroondara.vic.gov.au/heritage-strategy>

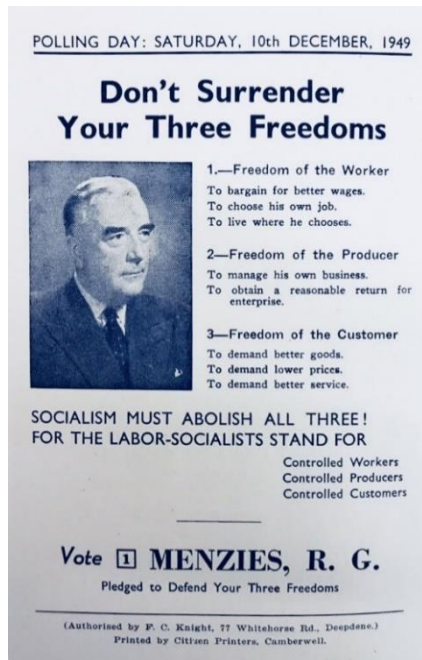
CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECENT DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTION

Camberwell Historical Society welcomed the donations of a book and a newspaper auction advertisement from Surrey Hills Historical Society and a book from Hawthorn Historical Society. Dr Joely Taylor donated many books on the history of Camberwell and Melbourne. Colleen Moore donated 26 prints of Camberwell in England. Fiona Hill donated copies of Camberwell High School yearbook, *Prospice* from 1979 and 1980.

REPORT OF MEETINGS 2024

26 March 2024 **The Menzies Watershed: Liberalism, Anti-communism, Continuities 1943–1954**

Dr Zachary Gorman



Dr Zachary Gorman is the academic coordinator at the Robert Menzies Institute. A professional historian, Gorman has worked as a researcher and academic since 2013. He has written two books, *Sir Joseph Carruthers: Founder of the New South Wales Liberal Party* and *Summoning Magna Carta: Freedom's Symbol Over a Millennium* and edited and annotated the 250th anniversary edition of *Captain James Cook, R.N.-150 Years After*.

Sir Robert Menzies was the nation's longest-serving prime minister. He transformed and dominated the politics, implementing policies that laid the foundations of modern Australia. The story of Menzies and his governments is essential to Australian political history. The eleven years that passed between the 1943 and the 1954 elections were arguably some of the most pivotal in Australian history. This was a period of intense political, policy and strategic transition, which saw a popular Labor Government and its state-led vision for

post-war reconstruction toppled by Robert Menzies and his newly formed political machine, the Liberal Party of Australia.

1949 was the time of our greatest political watershed in Australia. The philosophical debate was about post-war reconstruction. The government outlook was socialist – banking, healthcare, housing, air travel and utilities. There was a housing crisis in the 1940s. Few houses were built in the 1920s and 1940s as building materials were diverted to the war effort (1920s because of the Depression?). A baby boom and post-war migration added to the housing crisis. Chifley advocated renting directly from the government. Menzies was anti-socialist. The rates of home ownership increased under Menzies due to his policies: 1947 – 50%, 1966 – 71%.

Curtin Labor Government referendum *The Constitution Alteration (Post-War Reconstruction and Democratic Rights) Bill 1944* was an unsuccessful proposal to alter the Australian Constitution to give the Commonwealth an additional 14 powers for a period of five years, with Prime Minister John Curtin saying that maintaining wartime controls was necessary for Australia to re-adjust to peacetime conditions.

Menzies accepted leadership of the opposition party. The powers referendum helped Menzies. The Liberal Party was formed in 1944. It turns 80 this year. Menzies was the driving force. The government had the power to legislate on social services including health, education and scholarships. The public / private health care mix goes back to Menzies. Chifley tried to nationalise the bank and the airlines which increased Menzies' popularity. Election Posters stated Don't Surrender Your Three Freedoms: freedom of the worker, freedom of the producer, and

freedom of the consumer. Coal and petrol were rationed. Strikes led to production problems which led to blackouts.

The size of the Federal Parliament increased from 74 to 121 in the Senate and 36 to 60 in the House of Representatives.

Menzies was economically liberal. He tried to sell archaic assets such as whaling stations and government shipping lines. He has a record of achieving long-term prosperity.

Communism

An international battle was being waged against communism: the Cold War. The outbreak of WWII was felt to be imminent. The Soviets had taken control aggressively in neighbouring Finland. Menzies initially resisted a ban on communism and other forms of political thought as he felt it was anti freedom of speech. The 1950s changed his mind, however. Communists were seen as expansionists by the West. Australia's near neighbour Indonesia had a huge Communist party.

In 1951 the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) was founded. Australia began conducting its own espionage (the executive order was founded in the 1970s). Its funding was hidden, the organisation was hidden. Closer ties with Asia were developed. Menzies spearheaded reconciliation with Japan. The Colombo Plan was set up in 1951 to increase prosperity and as an antidote to communism, allowing 5000 students from southeast Asian countries to bypass the White Australia Policy and start their education in Australia. Prejudices were broken down through future leaders studying together.

Over the last 70 years, Australia has increasingly relied on ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and United States treaty), which was established in 1951 and lessened our reliance on Britain.

23 April 2024 Lambis Englezos AM – Fromelles, and Suzanne Chapman - Fromelles 2023



Lambis Englezos AM is an amateur historian who was responsible for discovering mass war graves from World War 1 near Fromelles in France. He is the co-founder and driving force behind the internationally renowned "Friends of the 15th Brigade". He is acknowledged in many books including Les Carlyon's *The Great War* and Robin Corfield's *Don't Forget Me Cobber*. Lambis Englezos was also instrumental in the publishing of the memoirs of his

friend, Roy Kyle. Roy's *An ANZAC's Story* was edited by Bryce Courtenay and reached the bestseller list. Lambis Englezos is proud to be part of the long journey to see dignity and honour brought to the diggers who disappeared on one horrible night in July 1916, a night now described as the worst in Australia's history.

The battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1916 was devastating for Australian soldiers. At Fromelles, the Germans had been there for one year and were well fortified while the Australians had been there two weeks. Australian command had tried to postpone the battle, but Lieut-General Richard Hacking refused. Soldiers of the 5th Australian Division, together with the British 61st Division, were ordered to attack strongly fortified German front line positions. The attack was intended as a feint to hold German reserves from moving south to the Somme where a large Allied offensive had begun on 1 July.

The feint was a disastrous failure. Australian and British soldiers charged over open ground in daylight under direct observation and heavy fire from the German lines. Over 5,500 Australians became casualties. Almost 2,000 of them were killed in action or died of wounds and about 400 were captured. This is believed to be the greatest loss by a single division in 24 hours during the entire First World War. Both the 59th and 60th divisions were involved. There were 26 pairs of brothers and one father/son pair. Afterwards a truce was proposed by the Germans to allow the collection of dead and wounded but was refused by command. Thirty Australian soldiers would be killed trying to recover wounded; 250 wounded were successfully brought back.

The Australian and British soldiers killed behind the German lines were gathered and buried by the Germans. They recorded the burials, removed and documented the ID discs and personal items, individually bagged them and sent them back to the soldiers' families through the Red Cross.

Soon after the war, Australian remains were gathered to construct VC Corner Cemetery, the only solely Australian war cemetery in France. However, the 1920 Graves Registration Unit missed the evidence of the mass burials in Pheasant Wood.



In July 1998, a new Australian Memorial Park was dedicated close to VC Corner Cemetery on a part of the old German front line which was briefly captured and held overnight by the 14th Australian Brigade on 19/20 July 1916. A bronze statue, titled 'Cobbers', by Australian sculptor Peter Corlett, depicts Sergeant Simon Fraser of the 57th Battalion in an enduring image of the aftermath of the battle, rescuing the wounded.

In 2007, following persistent research by Lambis Englezos, archaeological investigations found the remains of some 250 soldiers who were buried in five mass graves at Pheasant Wood by German troops in 1916. Identity badges, belt buckles, a British uniform button and a rising sun badge confirmed what research had indicated.

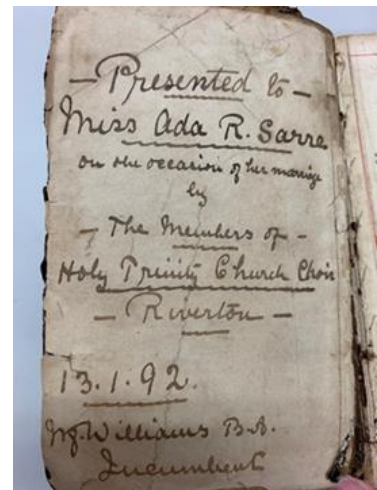
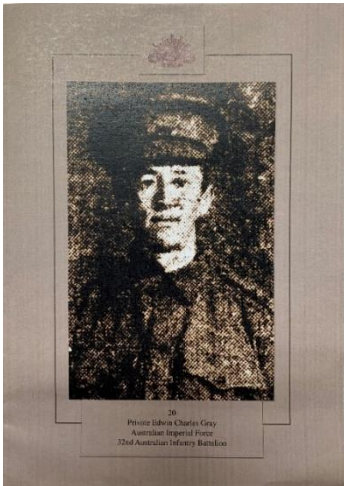


The landowner allowed work to proceed. Between 30 January and 19 February 2010, the remains of 249 soldiers were reinterred with full military honours in Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, newly constructed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Over 90 Australian soldiers were identified by name.

On 19 July 2010, the 94th anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles, the last of 203

Australian soldiers recovered from the excavation were buried in a solemn ceremony with full military honours. Later that day, a private ceremony was held for families of identified soldiers to dedicate the named headstones within the cemetery. Many more soldiers have since been identified and more ceremonies have since been held, most recently on 19 July 2023 where Suzanne Chapman uncovered the newly named grave of her uncle. Nearly 180 soldiers have now been identified.

Suzanne Chapman and Private Edwin Charles Gray



Suzanne travelled to Fromelles on the Western Front to honour her uncle Private Edwin Charles Grey. The family never knew what happened to Edwin. His mother, Ada, wrote letters asking for information, as did his brother Alfred who wrote to the Red Cross having heard that his brother might be a prisoner of war. The Gray family was officially notified that Edwin was killed in action on 2 April 1917.

Suzanne and a cousin gave DNA samples in 2008. Edwin's grave was finally identified in November 2022. Suzanne attended the opening of the new cemetery at Fromelles in 2010. She went again in 2023 to uncover her uncle's headstone. She took with her the bible that belonged to her grandmother Ada. She said it would have meant the world to her grandmother and her father, Herbert, that family were present at the graveside of her uncle.

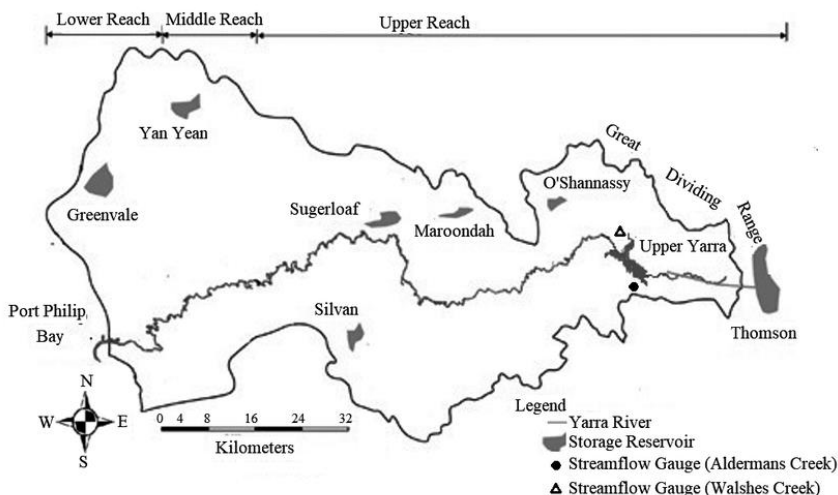


28 May 2024 Ian Penrose – The History of the Yarra River

After 27 years as a senior executive supporting big businesses, Ian Penrose switched his focus to the natural environment. Ian headed the Victorian Government's program to restore the Snowy River with increased flows and bankside rehabilitation. Later, as a State water commissioner, Ian helped manage environmental water releases.

The Yarra Riverkeeper Association (YRKA) was formed in 2004, aiming to protect and restore the Yarra and its tributaries, from source to mouth, for current and future generations. Ian became the first Yarra Riverkeeper in 2006, leading a community campaign to improve the wellbeing and appreciation of Melbourne's waterway. A balance between industry, agriculture and the river, between its social, economic and environmental uses needs to be found. In 2010 Ian was awarded the Melbourne Award for contribution to the environment by an individual. In 2015 he was Boroondara's Citizen of the Year, and in 2021, Ian was awarded the Penrose Medal, a prestigious award in the field of geology.

Ian presented a talk with many photographs and illustrations, both current and historical, detailing the history of the Yarra River from its upper catchment area down to the mouth. He started by talking about recreational uses of the Yarra and about Rudder Grange. It was built in 1904 by the Cooke family. The boathouse was a popular destination on the Yarra River. The business prospered and in 1911, after one of the many floods, the original building was replaced by a substantial two-storey building. In the 1920s Rudder Grange was a very popular destination.



The Cooke family sold the property to Carl Sierak in 1938. After World War II Rudder Grange was sold again; it slowly slid into decay and in 1963 it finally closed. The buildings have since been demolished. The property title went into the middle of the river.

Arthur Howard, who lived on the river, made canoes and hired them out in the 1950s. In the 1952 flood,

which rose to the level of the Chandler Highway bridge, the water bubbled up through the floorboards in his home. He and his wife Jess moved as much as possible upstairs but left their unloved old brown settee. As it started to float, Arthur opened the door to 'set it free'. Unfortunately, friends of theirs saw it and went to a lot of trouble to rescue it. Arthur and Jess were not pleased. Arthur and Jess had many stories from the river.

The Yarra River was important to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, who called it Birrarung or "place of mists and shadows". Their creation story of the Yarra describes how: *Two boys were playing when one of them climbed a wattle tree to find wattle-gum. He began throwing lumps of gum down to the other boy, but they disappeared. The boy noticed a hole in the ground and poked his spear into it in search of his gum. An old man sleeping beneath the ground woke*

up very angry and carried off the frightened boy. The path he made became the river. Their tears became the water.

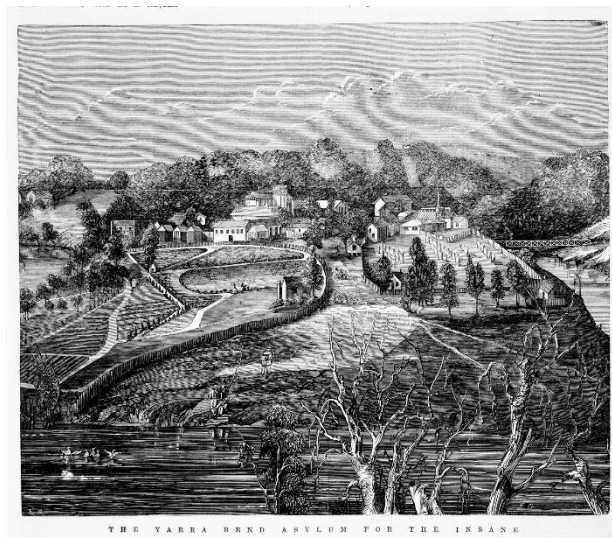
Yarra Yarra actually means flowing water and the name of the river was the result of John Wedge, John Batman's surveyor, hearing the local people using the words Yarra Yarra to describe the water movement.

In the catchment of the Yarra River, Yarra Falls, the tallest waterfall, cannot be visited. The Upper Yarra Reservoir was built in the 1950s as a major water supply for Melbourne, however 70% of Melbourne's water supply is now from the Thompson.

Following down the river the Big Peninsula Tunnel, the Little Peninsula Tunnel and the Pound Bend Tunnel were all built during the gold rush as it was thought that there would be gold in the riverbed. The tunnels were built to divert the river to try to mine for gold. It was not very successful. Ian drew our attention to the old lava flow, the flat area in Richmond, Collingwood and Heidelberg. Dwight's Falls was crossing for Indigenous People, Gardiner brought cattle through from Sydney through Dwight's Falls. There was a mill there in 1863. The falls now have a fish ladder after they were altered.

Studley Park toll bridge at the end of Church Street was built in 1855. There were many factories along the Yarra - wool washing, abattoirs, dye factories, which produced a lot of pollution and smell. By the 1940s the Yarra banks breached with bluestone. The health of the river, and its animals, reptiles, and birds, depends on clean water. Threats to this include pollution, stormwater, water extraction, more buildings on the banks and population increase. The Australia Day Super Swim was eventually cancelled due to ongoing pollution.

The ornamental lake in the Royal Botanical Gardens was previously part of the Yarra, a billabong. City Princes Bridge is actually the third bridge on the site. It is wider and longer than the original one span bridge. Melbourne is here because of the Yarra. Rock wall. Fresh on one side, salt on the other. Herring Island was built in 1929 from dredging material. It is now a sculpture park. The Church Street bridge was built in 1920. The previous bridge of 1857 was an old military bridge left over from the Crimean War. Cremorne Gardens from the 1850s was the first fun park, zoo, statues, entertainment. First flight in Australia, Coppin's balloon flight took place there on 1.2.1858. The Punt (Hoddle Bridge) was built in 1856.



Ian illustrated his presentation with a wide range of Yarra images, including: the Caledonian Gold Mine 1906; State Battery 1907; the Arthur Streeton paintings 'Still glides the stream, and shall for ever glide' and 'Spring' 1890; Fairfield Boathouse, Yarra Bend 1900; Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum 1860; Deep Rock in Yarra Bend cliff 1918; the Twickenham ferry and the MacRobertson bridge; and fundraiser Alick Wickham's 60m dive at Yarra Bend in 1918.

DATES FOR MEETINGS 2024

Meetings are held at 25 Inglesby Road, Camberwell

Saturday June 15	2024	2pm	Emeritus Professor Richard Broome AM <i>Billibellary's different courage: Wurunjeri's responses to colonisation</i> Combined meeting with Hawthorn Historical Society
Sunday 21 July	2024	2pm	Dr Peter Yule – 1880s Land Boom and Crash Combined meeting with Hawthorn Historical Society
Saturday 24 August	2024	2pm	AGM and Members' Show and Tell
Saturday 12 October	2024	2pm	History Walk Riversdale Road

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTION

Camberwell Historical Society welcomes donations of the following items relating to the former City of Camberwell: photographs and prints, documents, letters, diaries, maps, plans, books, pamphlets, and reminiscences of former residents and people who worked in the area.

Contributions to *Camberwell History* contain the opinions of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Camberwell Historical Society, its committee, or members.

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS 2024 - 25

Camberwell Historical Society's financial year operates from 1 July to 30 June. Subscriptions for the 2024 – 2025 financial year are due and payable from 1 July 2024. Single \$30, Family \$40. Camberwell Historical Society, BSB 633 000 Account No 142260678 Cheques to Camberwell Historical Society, PO Box 1274, CAMBERWELL 3124.

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

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Camberwell History: Editor — Adèle Fernando-Swart

The Society's logo is taken from an illustration by Bill Beasley.